

From: Bulletin Intelligence
To: Interior@BulletinIntelligence.com
Subject: U S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Friday, September 22, 2017
Date: Friday, September 22, 2017 7:01:51 AM

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[US Department of the Interior News Briefing](#)



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DOI In The News

Zinke Doles Out \$94M To Showcase The Benefits Of Trump's Pro-Drilling Policy.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/21, Siciliano) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "added some sweeteners to his conservation push Thursday by handing out \$94 million to states from payments the agency collects from offshore oil and natural gas drillers." Zinke "suggested that the funding was a test of the administration's pro-drilling policies that will seek to increase revenue to states as part of its energy dominance agenda." He said, "By advancing the administration's offshore energy goals, we will be able to generate more revenue for the [land conservation] fund to improve conservation and recreation opportunities for generations to come," Zinke said. The funding came from the Land and Water Conservation Fund program, which Zinke called "a resounding success" in making "physical investments in our communities."

Additonal coverage was provided by [WLUC-TV](#) Marquette, MI (9/21).

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke Rides Horses At Wilson's Creek, Announces Missouri Parks Grant.

The [Springfield \(MO\) News-Leader](#) (9/21, Schmitt) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Thursday "trekked through Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in Republic and announced a \$1.75 million grant for outdoor recreation and conservation in Missouri." At Wilson's Creek, Zinke "rode a horse on a tour, met with local fourth-graders from Lyon Elementary, took part in a fence-building exercise, fired a Civil War-era cannon and spent time with U.S. Rep. Billy Long, R-Missouri, who did not ride a horse due to his injured foot." The article notes that "the students attending the event were the winners of an art contest meant to celebrate fourth-graders in the U.S. being allowed to enter national parks for free throughout the year, according to the Republic School District."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Springfield \(MO\) News-Leader](#) (9/21).

Is Sexual Harassment A Problem In Our National Park System? [KSPR-TV](#) Springfield, MO (9/21, Pettit) reports that during a tour of Wilson's Creek, Interior National Battlefield Thursday, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke discussed sexual harassment problems at national parks. Talking to Wilson's Creek employees, Zinke said, "There is a problem and I have a couple investigations on my desk that are credible about sexual harassment and intimidation." During a question and answer period, Wilson's Creek employee, Connie Langum "stood up and pressed the Secretary how exactly he is going to fix the problem." The article says that "she was relieved to hear Secretary Zike's honesty and willingness to try to change that culture."

Secretary Zinke Declares October National Hunting And Fishing Month.

[KAIT-TV](#) Jonesboro, AR (9/21, Weston) reports that days before National Hunting and Fishing Day on September 23 Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "declared October will officially be recognized as National Hunting and Fishing Month at the Department." The order "comes on the heels of several major sportsmen actions from Interior including Wednesday's announcement of the addition of 600 acres of land in Arizona's Santa Teresa Mountains to make Wilderness Areas accessible for hunting and fishing." Zinke said, "Hunters and anglers are the backbone of wildlife and habitat conservation in America, and they contribute billions of dollars to conservation. From my perspective, the more sportsmen we have in the woods and waters, the better our wildlife and land will be. Formally recognizing the contributions of hunters and anglers to wildlife and habitat conservation is long overdue." The declaration was signed Wednesday night at the grand opening of the Wonders of Wildlife Museum in Springfield, Missouri.

Also reporting are [KUSA-TV Denver](#) Denver (9/21, Nee) and [WCSH-TV Portland \(ME\)](#) Portland, ME (9/21, Nee).

Industry Praises Zinke's Land Moves.

[Politico Influence](#) (9/21, Meyer) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's "moves to open up protected swaths of land and ocean to industry, recreational hunting, shooting and fishing" are receiving mixed reactions, according to The Wall Street Journal's Jim Carlton. Environmental groups are "unhappy, while some trade groups are applauding Zinke's moves toward scaling back former President Barack Obama's national monument designations."

[Analysis Points Out What Zinke Failed To Tell Trump.](#) [E&E Publishing](#) (9/21, Yachnin) reports that "when Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended that President Trump roll back the boundaries of a handful of national monuments last month, he pointed to the previously 18 instances in which presidents had struck land from memorials — more than 460,000 acres of federal land." However, "a new analysis from conservation lobbyist Andy Kerr suggests Zinke's comparison omitted a key fact: The bulk of that acreage remains under strict protections, with the majority now under the control of the National Park Service." Kerr said "he hopes his analysis will assist conservationists and others who have vowed to challenge any attempt by the Trump administration to alter the monuments without congressional action."

[Navajo Nation Vows To Sue Trump If He Shrinks Bears Ears National Monument.](#) The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/21, Siegel) reports that Navajo Nation attorney general Ethel Branch said Thursday the tribe is planning to sue the Administration if it attempts to reduce the size of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah. The Navajo Nation "argues changing the boundaries of Bears Ears would violate the Antiquities Act, a century-old law that permits presidents to unilaterally protect sacred sites, cultural artifacts and other historical objects."

Additional coverage was provided by [Reuters](#) (9/21, Volcovicic).

[Stewart Teases Compromise On Bears Ears, Other National Monuments.](#) The [St. George \(UT\) Spectrum](#) (9/21, DeMille) reports that the Trump Administration and "members of Utah's congressional delegation have a plan that could be a 'win-win-win' on the national monuments controversy in Utah," Rep. Chris Stewart said on Thursday. Stewart "offered no details on the proposal but hinted that it 'could surprise some people' and would strike a balance between shrinking the actual boundaries of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments and providing some level of protection for antiquities." He said, "We think we've got a real, sincere win-win-win where those people who want to protect these incredible places, including antiquities, and those people who rely on tourism, I think are going to be really happy with this outcome. And we were able to protect the local communities."

[SUWA Files Lawsuit Against San Juan Commissioners Over Zinke Meeting.](#) The [Moab \(UT\) Times-Independent](#) (9/21, Marcello) reports that "San Juan County's commissioners are facing legal scrutiny for allegedly violating Utah's Open and Public Meetings Act when they met this spring with Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke during his review of Bears Ears National Monument." The lawsuit was filed Sept. 15 by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. Stephen Bloch, attorney for SUWA, said, "It's clear the San Juan County Commission intentionally violated Utah's Open and Public Meetings Act as a way to hide their conversations and negotiations with the Interior Department and Trump administration officials regarding the fate of Bears Ears. We are looking for an order from the court confirming that the commissioners violated the law and ordering them to follow the law moving forward."

[White House Proposals Put The Oceans At Risk.](#) The editorial board of [Bloomberg View](#) (9/21) asserts that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is "wrong – especially when it comes to the ocean monuments currently in the secretary's sights." It notes that "Zinke's preliminary

recommendation is to let commercial fishing resume in the Pacific Remote Islands and in the nearby Rose Atoll Marine National Monument." However, the board argues that "commercial tuna fishing is precisely what put these ecosystems under pressure."

Also reporting are [Science Magazine](#) (9/21, Pala) and [WBUR-FM Boston](#) Boston (9/21, Bodden, Chakrabarti).

Congress Must Challenge Ryan Zinke's Attack On National Monuments. The [Seattle Times](#) (9/21) editorializes that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's report "goes beyond the scissoring of monument boundaries and recommends altering management plans designed to harmonize wildlife, recreation and public use. It's also riddled with inaccuracies, including basic details on hunting and fishing rights at two monuments in New Mexico." The paper notes that "only Congress has the power to shrink or abolish national monuments, not the president," and it urges lawmakers to give the report "the heave-ho."

Trump Administration Monument Recommendations Favor Extraction Over Conservation. The [Bangor \(ME\) Daily News](#) (9/21) editorializes that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's memo on national monuments is "less a thoughtful analysis and more the imposition of a mindset that nothing should be off limits to extraction, whether it be logs, fish, oil or coal." Moreover, the paper says that "the problem is, without Zinke formally releasing his recommendations, and explaining them, the public is left wonder what, if any, changes will be made to the Katahdin monument." It concludes that "Zinke and the Trump administration owes it to the region to explain their plans for Maine's monument."

Jeff Mitton: Archaeological Treasures In Bears Ears. In an op-ed for the [Boulder \(CO\) Daily Camera](#) (9/21, Mitton), Jeff Mitton, a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, raises concerns about the recommendation to reduce the size of the Bears Ears National Monument. Mitton asserts that public lands "do not belong to the citizens who live adjacent to them, nor are they at the disposal of the state in which they reside, or the whims of current government officials." He concludes that "our parks and monuments have been established in perpetuity not only for us, but more importantly, for the generations of Americans to come."

Zinke's Got Shrinkage. In an op-ed for the [Durango \(CO\) Telegraph](#) (9/21, Mehall), Luke Mehall urges Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to change his national monument recommendations to President Trump.

Additional Coverage: Road Closure Issue Clouds Monuments Review. Additional coverage of the review and leaked memo was provided by the [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (9/21, Last).

Maryland Proposes \$9 Billion Plan To Relieve Traffic Congestion.

[Reuters](#) (9/21, Shepardson) reports on Thursday, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) proposed "an ambitious \$9 billion public-private partnership" to "add four new lanes to the Capital Beltway (I-495)...and four new lanes on Interstate-270." Hogan said he wants "private developers to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain" the new lanes. Hogan started this process during a recent meeting with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/21, McCartney) reports the proposal "would also widen the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD 295) by four toll lanes after taking over ownership from the federal government." Under Hogan's proposal, "only the new lanes would have tolls; the others would remain free." Hogan said "the plan would not cost taxpayers any money" because of the private-sector involvement; "instead, he said, because of the toll revenue, the state could potentially reap billions of dollars of additional funds."

The [Baltimore Sun](#) (9/21, Cox) quotes Zinke spokesman Alex Hinson as saying, "Secretary Zinke and Governor Hogan recently had a wide ranging conversation about a number of issues of mutual interest. No decisions related to issues involving the Baltimore-Washington Parkway were made during that meeting." Hogan said, "It was actually the Department of Interior's decision to" hand over ownership of the B-W Parkway, adding, "we're happy to take it from them." Hogan said the Interior "doesn't love [the road] because they're in the park business and not the road business, and their intention is to dispose of all roads that they have under their control."

Additional coverage is provided by [WBAL-AM Baltimore](#) Baltimore (9/21, Waldman) online and the [Baltimore Business Journal](#) (9/21, Neibauer, Wilen).

White House Begins First In Series Of Meetings To Shape Climate Goals.

A "White House representative" has confirmed to the [Washington Examiner](#) (9/21, Siciliano) that the White House on Thursday began "the first of a series of meetings...that will lead to the reshaping of the Trump administration's climate change goals and policy." The spokesman

described the meeting between "the White House and officials from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Energy Department, State Department and the Department of Interior," as "a forward-looking meeting on strategy and how to prioritize the administration's climate goals and objectives moving forward." The spokesman added, "This particular meeting was more big picture strategy," and its purpose was to bring together "a whole group of stakeholders ... that are involved in climate issues and looking ahead to what policy initiatives we may put in place."

Next Merman At Sip 'n Dip Lounge Won't Be Tester, Bullock, Daines, Fox, Baucus Or Zinke.

The [Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#) (9/21, Fraser) reports that "the Sip 'n Dip Lounge announced on Twitter Monday it was looking to hire a new merman to swim in its live mermaid tank for Tiki Tuesdays." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke participated in "a tidal wave of tweets" that "included several other prominent state leaders,...a former U.S. ambassador, and a Hollywood actor who will soon appear in a movie remake as a mermaid." Zinke spokeswoman Heather Swift "said the tweets were 'definitely not' a planned attempt to boost the Sip 'n Dip's campaign."

Also reporting are the [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (9/21, Inbody) and the [Missoulian \(MT\)](#) (9/21, Fraser).

County Council Sends MLP Letter Of Support To Zinke.

The [Moab \(UT\) Times-Independent](#) (9/21, Marcello) reports that "despite mixed opinions regarding politics and public land processes, the Grand County Council voted Sept. 19 to send a letter to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke supporting the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) Master Leasing Plan (MLP) process." BLM representatives "have said that the Moab MLP — completed in 2016 and encompassing 785,000 acres of public land — aims to guide 'responsible' mineral development around Moab while also protecting natural resources and recreational opportunities." The "letter — citing an upcoming lease sale within the Moab MLP area slated for March 2018 — urges Zinke to uphold the decisions made by the 'locally-driven' plan, which includes oil and gas stipulations like no surface occupancy and other protections, they state, that would limit impacts on the recreation economy."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Moab \(UT\) Sun News](#) (9/21, Herndon).

Additional Coverage: Wonders Of Wildlife Museum: Presidents, Actors Attend Springfield Grand Opening.

Additional coverage of the grand opening Springfield's Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium was provided by the [Kansas City \(MO\) Star](#) (9/21, Londberg), the [Springfield \(MO\) News-Leader](#) (9/21, Zhu), and [Yahoo! News](#) (9/21, Miller).

Don't Speak For Westerners When Exploiting Public Lands.

In an op-ed for [The Hill](#) (9/21, Molvar), Erik Molvar, a wildlife biologist and serves as the executive director of Western Watersheds Project, criticizes those "calling for public land sell-offs, tax breaks, and an end to government regulations." According to Molvar, "it would seem that these folks have a direct line to the Trump administration, but conservation-minded westerners are starting to see the sham for what it is." He says that "as more and more westerners rally to the defense of their public lands, the good old boys are losing their stranglehold on the public debate."

Gun Lobby Co-opts Sportsmen's Agenda With SHARE Act.

For the "Congress" blog of [The Hill](#) (9/21, Hartl), Brett Hartl, the government affairs policy director at the Center for Biological Diversity, claims that the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act ,or SHARE Act, "does almost nothing to actually enhance sportsmen's access." However, he claims that "it does contain massive giveaways to the National Rifle Association and the gun lobby that would sweep aside common-sense measures to limit gun violence — not to mention continuing the assaults on the Endangered Species Act and environmental protections that have become the hallmark of the current Congress." Hartl argues that "whatever legitimate grievances sportsmen's groups have with access to hunting and fishing, this bill is a terrible way to address them."

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

Key Republican Revives Bill To Strip Bureau Of Indian Affairs Of Recognition Powers.

The [Nation Sun News](#) (9/21) reports that Rep. Rob Bishop is "once again pushing a bill that requires all tribes seeking federal recognition to go through Congress." Bishop, the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, "introduced H.R. 3744, the Tribal Recognition Act last week." While the legislation "establishes standards for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to research petitions submitted by tribes seeking recognition, it bars the executive branch from making decisions on those petitions."

Ownership Of Controversial Native American Artifacts Transferred To Peabody Essex Museum.

[WBUR-FM](#) Boston (9/21, Gorel) reports that "a controversial collection of about 150 Native American artifacts are staying at the Peabody Essex Museum." The Andover Newton Theological School "announced Thursday it was transferring ownership of the collection to the museum where it's been housed since 1946." In a statement, the Peabody Essex Museum "pledged to complete the work to bring the collection into compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)."

Browning Ordered To Give Assets To Montana's Blackfeet Tribe.

The [AP](#) (9/21) reports that "a state judge has ordered the northern Montana town of Browning to turn over most of its assets to the Blackfeet Tribe to settle lawsuits between the two governments." The settlement, "approved by District Judge James Reynolds last month, is part of Browning's efforts to dissolve itself as a town." According to the article, "Glacier County and the tribe will take over municipal services for Browning residents, including water, sewer and garbage services and fire protection." The Blackfeet Law Enforcement Services and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will provide law enforcement.

Bureau Of Land Management

Appeals Court Throws Out Case On Obama Fracking Rule, Citing Trump Repeal Effort.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/21, Siciliano) reports that the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed a case on whether the federal government is able to regulate fracking under an Obama Administration rule. The court dismissed the case "based on the Trump administration's move to repeal the Bureau of Land Management regulation." The court dismissal read, "Our proceeding to address whether the district court erred in invalidating the ... fracking regulation when the [Bureau of Land Management] has now commenced rescinding that same regulation appears to be a very wasteful use of limited judicial resources."

Also reporting are the [AP](#) (9/21, Elliott), [Reuters](#) (9/21, Aubin), [The Hill](#) (9/21, Wheeler), the [Denver Post](#) (9/21), the [Grand Junction \(CO\) Daily Sentinel](#) (9/22, Webb), and [Law360](#) (9/21, Rodriguez).

Purchase Opens 32,600 Acres Near Coronado Forest To Hiking, Hunting.

The [Cronkite News](#) (9/21, Windes) reports that "the Interior Department's purchase of a plot of private land will allow public access to 32,600 acres of previously isolated forest land, a move that drew praise from wilderness advocates and hunters alike this week." The deal announced Wednesday "opens up two parcels of public land, one in the Coronado National Forest and one northwest of Safford, that had been inaccessible because they were surrounded by private property." The Bureau of Land Management "worked with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the South Eastern Arizona Sportsmen Club and the Trust for Public Land over several years to acquire the land needed for access."

Nevada Bureau Of Land Management Rangers Helping In Puerto Rico After Hurricane Maria.

[KTNV-TV](#) Las Vegas (9/21) reports that "Bureau of Land Management Law Enforcement Rangers from Nevada are currently deployed to San Juan, Puerto Rico and are assisting with relief and search and rescue efforts in the wake of Hurricane Maria." According to the article, "rangers Bill Hart from the Ely District and Paul Zohovetz of Fernley, who is assigned to the Carson City District, arrived in San Juan prior to Hurricane Maria, which blew ashore Wednesday morning as a Category 4 storm with winds of 155 mph." Hart and Zohovetz are "among several other Bureau of Land Management officers nationally who were on a roster to assist with national emergencies

through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Support Function."

Cliven Bundy Wants To Fire Attorney Just Before Trial.

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (9/21, Ferrara) reports that "Bunkerville rancher Cliven Bundy wants to fire his lawyer less than a month before he is to stand trial on charges related to a 2014 standoff with the Bureau of Land Management." Defense lawyer Bret Whipple, "whom Bundy retained, filed court papers Thursday asking for a hearing as soon as possible."

Also reporting is the [Arizona Republic](#) (9/21).

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

Cape Cod Environmental Group In Opposition To Atlantic Ocean Offshore Drilling Proposal.

The [Cape Cod \(MA\) News](#) (9/21, Gottlieb) reports that the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has proposed a five-year program allowing offshore exploration and drilling in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans. In response, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) sent the acting BOEM director a letter within the public comment period stating that the area held too many inherent risks for drilling. APCC Executive Director Andrew Gottlieb said, "The relatively small amount of oil and gas that might be available offshore is not anywhere near worth the risk Cape Cod would be assuming were those resources allowed to be developed."

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

BSEE Director Charts Path For Robust Offshore U.S. Energy Production.

The [World Oil](#) (9/21) reports that Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Director Scott Angelle "discussed the work underway at BSEE with industry members at the Louisiana Oil & Gas Association Fall Meeting Tuesday in Lafayette." Angelle said, "We are in a time of change. Now is the time to move beyond the goal of energy independence to energy dominance." Angelle explained "that regulatory reform, integrating a risk-based protocol into the inspection program, and reviewing permit processes to increase efficiency are all efforts underway at BSEE." He said, "BSEE is clearly moving from creating hardships to creating partnerships, from an era of isolation to an era of cooperation. To safely develop our OCS energy resources as the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act requires, BSEE and industry must work together as partners recognizing that we have different roles, and collaborating to make it happen."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Lafayette \(LA\) Daily Advertiser](#) (9/21, Stickney).

DOI Ducks Taylor Energy FOIA Suit Over Oil Spill Comments.

[Law360](#) (9/21) reports that "a D.C. federal judge on Thursday nixed Taylor Energy's suit accusing the U.S. Department of the Interior of holding back information used in public statements gauging the company's cleanup of a decade-old Gulf of Mexico oil spill, saying the agency had adequately complied with Taylor's Freedom of Information Act requests."

Federal Scientists: Dispersants From BP Spill Make People Sick.

The [Mobile \(AL\) Press-Register](#) (9/21, Raines) reports that the National Institutes of Health published a new study showing that dispersants, used to clean up the BP oil spill, can cause illness in humans. The study surrounded more than 31,000 workers that handled or were in close proximity of the dispersants. According to the article, "1.8 million gallons of Corexit EC9500A or Corexit EC9527A were applied in the Gulf" to clean up after the BP spill. The study is the largest ever on Corexit products' impact on human health.

Fish And Wildlife Service

Industry Groups Sue FWS To Delist Endangered Beetle.

[Law360](#) (9/21, Phillis) reports that "nonprofit and industry groups filed suit in Oklahoma federal court on Thursday against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service arguing that it hadn't addressed a petition to remove the American burying beetle from the endangered species list in a timely fashion and must do so."

'Adverse Effect' Up For Debate At Bottling Plant Hearing.

The [Daily Inter Lake \(MT\)](#) (9/21, Reilly) reports on "day three of the Montana Artesian Water Company's water-use permit hearing in Kalispell." Attorneys "representing the company and its opponents remained focused on its request to draw up to 450 gallons per minute from the aquifer for a proposed bottling plant in Creston." Objectors sought "to show that these plans will have an 'adverse effect' on nearby water users."

Scientists Measure Damage To Endangered Species' Habitat.

The [Victoria \(TX\) Advocate](#) (9/21, Priest) reports that "when Hurricane Harvey made landfall last month, a game camera at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge snapped pictures about 5 miles from the eye of the storm." This week, Elizabeth Smith, senior whooping crane scientist with the International Crane Foundation, "found the camera unscathed and replaced it with another." Wade Harrell, whooping crane recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "said because there are no tide gauges at the refuge, Smith's pictures, along with the debris line, will help scientists estimate the height of the storm surge there."

Additional Coverage: Trump Aims For Arctic Oil And Gas.

Additional coverage that the Trump Administration is "trying to lay the groundwork to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) for oil and gas drilling" was provided by [Oil Price](#) (9/21, Cunningham) and the [Citrus County \(FL\) Chronicle](#) (9/21).

National Park Service

Melania Trump To Tend The White House Garden Friday.

[CNN](#) (9/21, Bennett) reports that the First Lady will hold her first event at the White House Kitchen Garden on Friday. According to communications director Stephanie Grisham, the First Lady will host "will host 'a local children's group' at a garden event Friday at noon" during which she and members of the National Park Service "will plant and harvest vegetables" alongside the children.

[The Hill](#) (9/21, Kurtz) notes that former First Lady Michelle Obama established the garden in 2009 as part of her "Let's Move" initiative aimed at fighting childhood obesity.

DeVos: Eisenhower A 'Gorgeous Memorial'.

The [Daily Caller](#) (9/21, Phippen) reports that Education Secretary Betsy DeVos "endorsed the proposed design of the widely panned design for the Eisenhower Memorial, saying the expansive monument 'looks to be a gorgeous memorial.'" DeVos "prepared a video message in support of the memorial for a meeting of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (USCFA) where architect Frank Gehry's latest design received unanimous approval."

At Ferry Summit, A Vision Emerges For A Commuter System Along The Potomac River.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/21, Lazo) reports that Northern Virginia officials and business leaders are pushing "a high-speed ferry system connecting the region via the Potomac River, from as far as Woodbridge to the D.C. waterfront," as an alternative daily commute. On Thursday, a 149-seat ferry successfully "made a test run from Occoquan Harbour Marina in Prince William to Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County, replicating the modern ferry experience with free WiFi, charging stations and onboard concessions."

Fort Sumter To Reopen On Friday After Closing Due To Hurricane Irma.

[WCSC-TV](#) Charleston, SC (9/21) reports that Fort Sumter will "reopen to the public starting on Friday after closing earlier this month due to Hurricane Irma." Officials said on Thursday, "Starting tomorrow, normal operations resume for the daytime trips to Fort Sumter. There will be five trips to the fort- three from the Liberty Square departure site and two from Patriots Point. The evening sunset has been canceled for tomorrow."

New Superintendent Named For Redwood National And State Parks.

[Redheaded Blackbelt \(CA\)](#) (9/21, Kemp) reports that the National Park Service has named Steven Mietz superintendent of Redwood National & State Parks. Mietz is currently the superintendent of Great Basin National Park in Nevada. Mietz replaces Steven Prokop who retired earlier in the

year. Laura E. Joss, regional director for the National Park Service's Pacific West Region, said, "Steve is an exceptional leader who is passionate about building positive relationships to preserve our parks. He has a proven track record of collaborating with partners. Along with his strong science background, this makes him an excellent fit for Redwood."

New Cape Lookout Superintendent Named.

The [Coastal Review](#) (9/21) reports that "after serving as acting superintendent of Cape Lookout National Seashore since May, Jeff West has been selected to serve as superintendent effective Nov. 12, National Park Service Southeast Regional Director Stan Austin announced Thursday." Austin said in a statement, "Jeff is deeply committed to protecting America's most treasured resources. He approached his acting assignment at Cape Lookout as a critical mission and quickly earned the community's trust. Jeff's skills and experience are ideal for the superintendency, which requires astute leadership and collaboration."

St. Joseph's School Listed In National Register Of Historic Places.

The [Fond du Lac \(WI\) Reporter](#) (9/21) reports that St. Joseph's School in the city of Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County, has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Office Of Insular Affairs

Trump Says He Will Visit Puerto Rico To Survey Damage From Hurricane Maria.

During a meeting at the UN General Assembly Thursday, President Trump said "he plans to visit Puerto Rico to personally assess the devastation from Hurricane Maria," the [Washington Times](#) (9/21, Miller) reports. Trump, who "did not say when he would make the visit," said, "Puerto Rico is in very, very tough shape. Their electrical grid is destroyed. It wasn't in great shape to start with." Earlier Thursday, Trump "declared a major disaster in Puerto Rico that made federal funds available to those affected by the storm." A [Washington Post](#) (9/21) calls Trump's disaster declaration for Puerto Rico "a welcome and needed step as it will make federal assistance available to Puerto Ricans affected by the storm," and adds that his announcement that he will visit the island is "equally welcome" because "in doing so he sets an example for the rest of the country."

Vice President Pence said on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (9/21), "With regard to Puerto Rico, we have people coming ashore now who were pre-positioned on ships. We're about to deliver eight million meals over eight million liters of water, 31 industrial generators. We are there with the people of Puerto Rico as President Trump has said and we are going to stay there until Puerto Rico and all the good people there build all the way back."

Meanwhile, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/21, De Córdoba, Campo-Flores, De Avila) reports on the damage Maria left in Puerto Rico and says officials have warned residents that a difficult road to recovery lies ahead. According to Abner Gómez, executive director of Puerto Rico's emergency-management agency, residents will likely have to do without aid for 72 hours, due to the severity of the damage and the demands on government resources. A front-page story in the [Washington Post](#) (9/21, A1, Schmidt, Somashekhar, Zezima) reports that on Thursday, "emergency management teams and the National Guard rescued dozens of residents, taking them to nearby shelters. But many more remained stuck in their homes with almost no cellphone reception, some of them waiting on their rooftops."

A front-page story in the [New York Times](#) (9/21, A1, Ferré-sadurní, Alvarez, Robles) says "the road to recovery just went from long to seemingly endless" for Puerto Rico, which has been "long crippled by enormous debt and an essentially bankrupt financial system." The island "faces a mountain of need in the coming months just as the federal government is stretched to the limit grappling with the destruction left by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma." The [Miami Herald](#) (9/21, Mazzei, Martínez) also reports on the devastation in Puerto Rico, saying "the enormity of Maria's destruction [is] still unknown even to the overwhelmed Puerto Rican government."

Carlos Mercader, executive director of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration was asked on [CNN's The Lead](#) (9/21) what the island's most immediate need is. Mercader said, "Right now, definitely that would be restoration of the communication on the island. Right now we're working with FEMA in what we call PREMA, which is the emergency agency in Puerto Rico, to reestablish down there in that location satellites so we can start getting communications. ... And also, obviously, electricity. Right now we have 100 percent of the island without electricity. Hospitals that are being operated with generators and other buildings that basically depend on

generators. That's why we're also asking for more generators because we know that the infrastructure was hit so bad with the winds and the flooding that to restore that kind of infrastructure is going to take a long time."

[NBC Nightly News](#) (9/21, story 3, 0:15, Holt) reported that Maria "regained strength after it struck Puerto Rico" and is "expected to cut close to Turks and Caicos late tonight, and after that, the current track shows it barreling between the US east coast and Bermuda."

Maria Kills 15 On Dominica. On [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/21, lead story, 2:45, Holt), Gabe Gutierrez reported, "In hard-hit Dominica, officials confirm 15 people died from the storm." [USA Today](#) (9/21, Stanglin, Rice) says Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, who "cried as he spoke to a reporter on the nearby island of Antigua," said, "We have buried in excess of 15 people. ... It is a miracle there were not hundreds of deaths."

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/21, story 3, 1:05, Muir) reported that there is "great concern for American medical students on Dominica" as the island has been "wiped out" by Hurricane Maria. ABC (Oquendo) added that there are many "missing in communities that are completely cut off." Yet, late Thursday, there was "word that 1,000 medical students, many of them American, whose condition was unknown, have been reached and are confirmed safe."

'We Need Help': U.S. Virgin Islands Governor On Devastation After Maria And Irma.

In an interview on [WBUR-FM](#) Boston (9/21), U.S. Virgin Islands Governor Kenneth Mapp talked about the recovery effort following the passage of Hurricane Maria. Mapp said, "We need help. With our FEMA partners and our cruise ship partners, we're bringing in a lot of food, water, tarpaulins, personal hygiene packs, cots and blankets. That's really the immediacy of the need. We're asking folks who can to go to USVI Recovery and they can donate there." He added, "I was able to speak to our Administrator William Brock Long of FEMA, and had a very good conversation with him, as well as the Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke, as we coordinate the relief for St. Croix."

Office Of Surface Mining

Enviros Win Suit Forcing DOI To Inspect Va. Coal Mine.

[Law360](#) (9/21, Phyllis) reports that "a Virginia federal judge on Wednesday gave environmental groups a quick win in their request for an inspection of a Red River Coal Co. mine where elevated levels of selenium were recorded nearby, saying that the Department of the Interior ignored key data when it denied the request." Judge James P. Jones "granted the Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards and the Sierra Club's summary judgment bid that sought a federal inspection of the Greater Wise No. 1 Mine."

US Geological Survey

Hurricane Irma: How Storm Surge Flooded The Florida Keys But Drained Tampa.

The [Miami Herald](#) (9/21, Staletovich) reports that a crew of six surveyors from the U.S. Geological Survey are racing "to find and measure water marks, the tiny traces of seaweed and sand that stick to walls, sign posts and anything left erect" in Hurricane Irma' wake. According to the article, "those marks provide the real-life evidence hurricane forecasters need to construct the powerful computer models used to issue warnings and keep people safe from a hurricane's most lethal weapon: storm surge." Jamie Rhome, who heads the National Hurricane Center's storm surge team, said, "In my 18 years here, I haven't seen a peak surge where it was measured by an instrument. You have to figure it out by surveying the damage."

USGS Geologist Says 15,000 Buildings Could Be Seriously Damaged If Major Quake Strikes LA.

The [Epoch Times](#) (9/21, Phillips) reports that "if a massive earthquake, like the one in Mexico City earlier this week, struck Los Angeles, it could be devastating, according to an expert." Dr. Ken Hudnut, with the U.S. Geological Survey, "cited a recent study that found some 15,000 Los Angeles structures are vulnerable to collapse during a significant earthquake, according to ABC7."

Additional Reading.

- *How Prepared Is The U.S. For Earthquakes? : NPR.* [NPR](#) (9/21).

- *Will A Catastrophic Earthquake Strike The U.S.?* [TIME](#) (9/21, Gajanan).
- *We Know Where The Next Big Earthquakes Will Happen.* [Vox](#) (9/21, Irfan).
- *Mount Rainier Fears As 'Swarm' Of 20 Mini Quakes Hit.* [Daily Mail](#) (9/21, Macdonald).
- *Recent Earthquakes Likely Aftershocks In Oklahoma.* [KOTV-TV](#) Tulsa, OK (9/21).
- *Researchers Dig For Answers About How Often Big Earthquakes Hit Tetons.* [Wyoming Public Radio](#) (9/21, Edwards).
- *Scientists Track Forces Behind Mormon Lake's Rise And Fall.* [Arizona Daily Sun](#) (9/21, Cowan).
- *Living In A Liquefaction Zone.* [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (9/21, Moffitt).
- *Sinkhole Appears In Spokane Family's Backyard.* [KHQ-TV](#) Spokane, WA (9/21, Chen).
- *Alternate Solution Proposed To Army Corps' Great Lakes Invasive Species Plan.* [WUWM-FM](#) Milwaukee (9/21, Bence).

Top National News

US, China Impose New Sanctions On North Korea.

Media coverage of the President's announcement Thursday of new sanctions against North Korea is generally positive. Reports cast China's cooperation as a significant development. Two of last night's network broadcasts reported the announcement. Calling it "a major victory for this White House," [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/21, story 4, 2:00, Muir) said the President announced "tough new sanctions against North Korea, and with the promise of help from China." Jonathan Karl said, "After threatening to annihilate the entire nation of North Korea," the President "put aside war talk in favor of diplomacy."

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/21, story 5, 2:20, Holt), Kristen Welker said the US, Japan, and South Korea presented a "united front at the UN" as the President "ordered some of the toughest sanctions yet against North Korea." In what Welker called "a surprising move," the President "said China's central bank has ordered its other banks to cut off North Korea." Analysts say China's involvement "is critical." [Reuters](#) (9/21, Holland, Brunnstrom) reports Trump "stopped short of going after" China, and "praised its central bank for ordering Chinese banks to stop doing business with North Korea." Four sources told Reuters China's central bank "has told banks to strictly implement United Nations sanctions against North Korea."

However, the [AP](#) (9/21) reports that while Trump "praised China for instructing its banks to cut off business with Pyongyang...neither the Chinese nor Trump officials were ready to say so." Treasury Secretary Mnuchin said he spoke Thursday with the head of China's central bank, but "I am not going to comment on confidential discussions." If enforced, the AP says the "Chinese action Trump described could severely impede the isolated North's ability to raise money for its missile and nuclear development."

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/21, Morrongiello) says Mnuchin "provided limited details about the latest sanctions...and the impact they will have with major North Korean trading partners like China," while the [New York Post](#) (9/21, Moore) reports Mnuchin said companies around the world "are now on notice" about doing business with North Korea.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/21, Phillip) reports Trump announced new financial sanctions "that target North Korea and foreign companies or individuals that do business" with the regime, and "significantly...said that Chinese President Xi Jinping had ordered Chinese banks to cease conducting business with North Korean entities." Trump praised Xi, calling the move "very bold" and "somewhat unexpected." The [Washington Times](#) (9/21, Boyer) similarly reports Trump thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping "for action Thursday by China's central bank," which he acknowledged "was a somewhat unexpected move." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/21, Radnofsky, Talley) also notes Trump's praise for China, which accounts for more than 90% of Pyongyang's trade.

Similarly calling China's move "a crucial step," [Bloomberg News](#) (9/21, Talev) says "it isn't clear what effect the heightened sanctions will have on North Korea," but the announcement it "shows that Trump, who earlier this week threatened to 'totally destroy' North Korea...is continuing to pursue economic and diplomatic means to address Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs." Ambassador Haley said the new sanctions won't necessarily "change Kim's attitude," but "will slow down" the regime's weapons programs. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/21, Wilkinson) reports that the new measures target North Korea's "textiles, fishing industry and shipping. In fact, sanctions against those industries are already in place, so it was not clear what was different about the additional ones."

The [Daily Caller](#) (9/21) says the executive order signed Thursday by the President "significantly" expand sanctions on Pyongyang, while [Politico](#) (9/21, McCaskill, Nelson, Toosi) says the move "escalat[ed] the US campaign of economic pressure" against the regime. [The Hill](#) (9/21, Easley) reports Trump "expressed an urgency to curb North Korea's nuclear and ballistics programs," which he called "a grave threat to peace and security in our world."

Trump, [USA Today](#) (9/21, Jackson) reports, "appeared to hold out the possibility of negotiations" with North Korea. When asked by a reporter if diplomacy was still possible, Trump responded: "Why not?" The [New York Times](#) (9/21, Baker, Sengupta) reports that some Trump critics "praised him...for focusing on diplomatic pressure rather than saber rattling."

Vice President Pence said on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (9/21) before the new sanctions were announced that "most Americans know and, frankly, the world knows that a strong, tough-minded, plain-spoken American President contributes to the security and peace in the world. I mean, the simple truth is that North Korea's continued provocations, a nuclear test, ballistic missile test threats against the continental United States of America and allies in the region is unacceptable." Pence added that "the world is in agreement: We cannot permit a rogue regime in Pyongyang to possess ballistic missiles and use nuclear weapons. That represents a threat to the United States, to our allies and other nations in the region and we're going to continue to bring that pressure."

David Ignatius, writing in his [Washington Post](#) (9/21) column, says US officials need "to decide how serious a threat North Korea truly poses to America." If we see Kim "as a regional threat, rather than a global one," Ignatius writes that "then perhaps the right response is an intelligence strategy that begins with the reality of his split with China – and takes off from there." He notes that in 2003, China "suspended oil deliveries for several days (blaming the problem on a supposed pipeline malfunction) and North Korea quickly began negotiations. In the deniable realm of intelligence operations, it's always possible that a pipeline could 'malfunction' again, or that other crippling difficulties could arise for Pyongyang and its mercurial leader."

Kim Calls Trump "Deranged," Warns He Will "Pay Dearly" For Threats. All three networks last night reported on North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's reaction to President Trump's address to the UN General Assembly earlier this week – during which he threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea and repeated his "Rocket Man" nickname for Kim. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/21, story 4, 2:00, Muir) said Kim responded to the President's remarks, calling him "mentally deranged and said that he will make him pay dearly...for his speech at the UN." The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/21, story 6, 2:30, Mason) said Kim "shot off his mouth, calling President Trump a 'mentally deranged dotard,' and warning he'll pay dearly for his threats." [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/21, story 5, 2:20, Holt) also reported the North Korean leader's remarks, saying "for now, the war of words continues."

The [AP](#) (9/21) says the "war of words" between the two leaders "escalated Thursday" when Kim, "speaking in a rare personal address on North Korean television", called Trump a "rogue" and a "gangster." Kim concluded his address vowing: "I will surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged US dotard with fire." [USA Today](#) (9/21, Ventura) reports that soon after Kim's address, Merriam-Webster tweeted the definition of "dotard" after it went viral as "a state or period of senile decay marked by decline of mental poise and alertness."

Another [USA Today](#) (9/21, Estepa) report, meanwhile, examines Trump's use of the nickname "Rocket Man" for Kim, noting that the President "isn't the only US leader who loves nicknames." Former President George W. Bush "shared that penchant and was known for it during his time in office."

North Korean FM Warns Of Possible Hydrogen Bomb Test In Pacific. The [AP](#) (9/21) reports South Korea's Yonhap news agency said North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho said Thursday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly that his country may test a hydrogen bomb in the Pacific Ocean.

Lavrov Warns Against "Warlike Hysteria" Over North Korea. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/21, Sonne) reports Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned against "warlike hysteria" over North Korea at the UN on Thursday. While he did not mention Trump by name, the Journal says his remarks were nonetheless an implicit rebuke to the President. "The escalation of wartime hysteria is not only a dead end but a ruinous path," Lavrov said.

USA Today Analysis: Trump "Sets Up Showdown" With Iran, North Korea. A [USA Today](#) (9/21, Jackson) analysis says President Trump's visit this week to the UN General Assembly "will likely be remembered for its unusual and unadorned attacks on Iran and North Korea that could set the stage for months or even years of nuclear-fueled tension and uncertainty." While Trump "did make some headway Thursday on his push to pressure North Korea to back off its weapons

program," it was his threats to "totally destroy" North Korea – and his "Rocket Man" nickname for its leader – "that drew headlines and fueled chatter on the sidelines of the United Nations." According to USA Today, "some allies are concerned about the war-of-words from both Trump and North Korea and want to see more of a diplomatic focus," while others fear he will soon withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal.

Russia, China Conducting Military Exercises 100 Miles From North Korean Border. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/21, Ayres) reports that the navies of Russia and China this week "engaged a maritime joint exercise less than 100 miles from the North Korean border with Russia." While Russia and China have been holding joint military exercises since 2012, the timing of the latest drills "is significant" amid rising tensions.

Spotlight On Murkowski And McCain As GOP Seeks 50 Votes For Graham-Cassidy.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/21, story 6, 2:00, Muir) reported on "the new effort to kill Obamacare. The Senate has until next week to pull off this newest attempt." ABC's Mary Bruce said that the fate of the bill is expected to come down to four Republicans: Sens. Susan Collins, John McCain, Lisa Murkowski, and Rand Paul. [USA Today](#) (9/21, Collins) reports that much of the focus is on Murkowski. An ad urging her to oppose the bill "started airing on televisions across Alaska on Tuesday," and "supporters of Obamacare are showing up at her offices, calling, tweeting and blitzing her with ads asking her to vote against the Republican repeal bill. White House officials and her Senate colleagues are doing all they can to convince her to support it."

The [Daily Caller](#) (9/21, Donachie) reports that Sen. Lindsey Graham "specifically wrote his bill...to provide concessions" to Alaska, according to "a conservative Hill staffer with first hand knowledge and one conservative strategist," and [Politico](#) (9/21, Haberkorn) reports that the bill "may protect Alaska and up to four other sparsely populated states from major cuts to Medicaid through 2026." The [New York Times](#) (9/21, A1, Zernike, Abelson, Goodnough) calls the bill the "most far-reaching" of this year's ACA replacement measures, through which the GOP "has come up with a way to repackage the funding for the law it loathes into a trillion-dollar pot of state grants." [Independent Journal Review](#) (9/21, Byrd) headlines its report "Republicans Attempt To Buy Murkowski's Vote In New Draft Of Health Care Bill." Still, [Axios](#) (9/22, Owens) reports that a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimate projects that Alaska "would lose 38% of federal funding for premium subsidies and Medicaid by 2026" under the measure.

Meanwhile, [Bloomberg News](#) (9/21, Edgerton) reports that Republicans are working to win McCain's support "for a likely vote next week on the GOP's 'last best hope' for repealing" the Affordable Care Act, according to Senate Majority Whip Cornyn. [USA Today](#) (9/21, Sanchez) reports that President Trump called Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey on Saturday to urge him to support the bill; McCain has said that Ducey's opinion is important in his determination. Ducey now supports the legislation.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/21, Feldscher) reports that Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA) told voters in his district that he expects McCain to oppose "the latest attempt to overhaul Obamacare because 'he's staring death in the face right now.'" Cartwright said, "The governor of Arizona came out in favor of the Lindsey Graham-Bill Cassidy bill so that puts pressure on McCain. But, man, something tells me McCain, he's staring death in the face right now, so he's probably going to make good choices and he's not going to bend to political pressure."

The [Washington Times](#) (9/21, Howell) reports that Paul, who has criticized the bill for leaving too much of the ACA intact, is facing pressure from opponents of legal abortion to back the measure.

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/21) says that Democratic arguments against the bill by Graham and Sen. Bill Cassidy are overwrought, and that Democrats' insistence that the process must be bipartisan flies in the face of liberals' own intransigence. But the [Washington Post](#) (9/21) says in an editorial that "even Republicans know their new health-care bill is horrible," citing Sen. Charles Grassley, "who candidly explained GOP thinking. 'I could maybe give you 10 reasons why this bill shouldn't be considered. ... But Republicans campaigned on this so often that you have a responsibility to carry out what you said in the campaign.'"

Eugene Robinson writes in the [Washington Post](#) (9/21), "Motivated by the cynical aims of fulfilling a bumper-sticker campaign promise and lavishing tax cuts on the wealthy, Republicans are threatening to pass a health-care bill they know will make millions of Americans sicker and poorer. Do they think we don't see what they're doing?"

Graham Says Vote Will Take Place Regardless Of Expected Outcome. The [Charleston \(SC\) Post and Courier](#) (9/21, Lovegrove) reports that Graham said Thursday that the Senate will vote even if there are not 50 firm votes in favor. Graham said, "We are going to vote. I don't think it's

possible for the Republican Party not to try everything to repeal and replace Obamacare."

Graham said on [Fox News Special Report](#) (9/21), "If you want money and power out of Washington, you want to end the march to single-payer healthcare, this is your last, best chance. ... I think we are going to get 50 Republicans to vote for federalism and I'll make a prediction: a couple Democrats are going to come on board because their state does so well."

AARP: Older Americans Could Pay More Than \$16,000 More Per Year Under Bill. [The Hill](#) (9/21, Sullivan) reports that an AARP study "finds that older people could pay as much as \$16,174 more per year for health coverage" under Graham-Cassidy as "a result of the possible elimination of two kinds of ObamaCare subsidies, which help people afford their premiums and out-of-pocket costs."

Kimmel Continues To Criticize Graham-Cassidy. [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/21, story 7, 1:40, Holt) reported that the "war of words" between the sponsors of the legislation and ABC's Jimmy Kimmel is continuing. Kimmel devoted 10 minutes of his [Wednesday night](#) show to the topic, and seven-and-one-half minutes on [Thursday night](#). On Thursday's [ABC's Jimmy Kimmel Live](#), he said, "I should not be the guy you go to for information on healthcare. And if these guys...would tell the truth for a change, I wouldn't have to. ... We have until September 30 to dodge this."

The [New York Times](#) (9/21, Qiu, Victor) writes, "A review of the factual statements in Mr. Kimmel's Wednesday night monologue suggests he has a strong grasp on the proposal, though there are nits to pick." The [New York Times](#) (9/21, Deb) also looks at past times when late-night hosts have gotten involved in political debates.

Cassidy was asked on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (9/21) if he can guarantee that under the Graham-Cassidy bill, governors will make sure that people with preexisting conditions are covered. Cassidy said, "The legislation says that nothing the governor asks for will be approved unless there is affordable and adequate coverage for those with preexisting conditions. President Trump tweeted last night he will not sign legislation unless it protects those with preexisting conditions."

Graham, Cassidy To Debate Klobuchar, Sanders On CNN. [CNN](#) (9/21) reports that on Monday, CNN will host a 90-minute primetime town hall on the bill, with sponsors Graham and Cassidy facing off against Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Bernie Sanders.

NYTimes "The Upshot": States Will Face Challenges In Building Health Systems. Margot Sanger-Katz writes in the [New York Times](#) (9/21) "The Upshot" that the Graham-Cassidy bill would require states to build their own health systems, which would be a complex process. After then-Gov. Mitt Romney's plan was adopted in Massachusetts in 2003, "it took four years before Romneycare was fully up and running," and the bill "would require every state in the country to make a similar soup-to-nuts evaluation of how they'd like their health care systems to work, to build such a system and be ready to open their doors in substantially less time – just over two years."

Premiums Expected To Climb In Illinois, South Carolina. The [Washington Free Beacon](#) (9/21, Meyer) reports that the four insurers serving Illinois via the ACA exchange "have requested an average premium rate hike of 35 percent for next year," requesting "a range of 15 to 43 percent in premium hikes." The [Charleston \(SC\) Post and Courier](#) (9/21, Sausser) reports that the South Carolina Department of Insurance said on Thursday that average ACA premiums in the state "will skyrocket 31 percent" next year.

White House Tax Cut Plan Gaining Momentum.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/21, Paletta, Debonis) reports that the White House's tax cut plan "is gaining new momentum as Republicans attempt to set aside months of intraparty squabbling and unify behind a key part of President Trump's agenda." The effort is being aided by "a tentative deal" between "key Republicans" to "allow for as much as \$1.5 trillion in tax reductions over 10 years," as well as "a growing willingness within the GOP to embrace controversial, optimistic estimates of how much economic growth their tax plan would create." However, there are still "numerous pitfalls...and Republicans have not yet agreed on major aspects of the plan." The [Washington Times](#) (9/21, Sherfinski) says the deal struck by Sens. Bob Corker and Pat Toomey "paving the way for potentially \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts over the next decade, suggest[s] broad outlines of a plan to be presented next week."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/21, Mascaro, Puzzanghera) says that while Republicans have "a blueprint and principles" and have "held countless strategy sessions for what could be the biggest tax overhaul in decades," Congress and the White House "have yet to agree on how to revamp the tax code, including how much to reduce corporate and individual tax rates, how tax cuts would be paid for or whether they will be offset at all." The Times says a "key problem" is a

continuing division within the party "between fiscal hawks who insist that any tax cut not add to the deficit and those who are willing to risk ballooning the debt in hopes that it will spur enough economic growth to cover the price tag."

Stewart: Tax Reform Must Address The Biggest Tax Breaks. James B. Stewart writes in his "Common Sense" column for the [New York Times](#) (9/21) that when the Administration reveals details of its tax reform plan, rich taxpayers "will be under the microscope" because "they take advantage of so many tax breaks that few, if any, pay the top rate of 39.6 percent." Eliminating some of those deductions "would make it possible to reduce tax rates for the highest earners (and everyone else) while raising the same or even more in total revenue." Stewart calls long-term capital gains, capital gains at death, state and local taxes, and mortgage interest "the big four" deductions that "will cost the government \$4.1 trillion over 10 years" and argues that "if proposed reforms don't address the biggest tax breaks, there will be little room to reduce rates over all – which is the carrot to make reform more palatable."

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

"World Hunger Haunts The UN Festivities." In an editorial, the [New York Times](#) (9/22) writes that as "the leaders of the world posture and sermonize for the United Nations General Assembly this week, a growing global specter should spur common concern among them: World hunger, after a decade-long decline, spiked last year, because of scourges like global warming and civil conflicts that show little sign of abating." Ahead of the meeting, a new UN report said the "number of undernourished human beings on the planet increased from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016." The Times argues that if diplomats at the UN "are paying attention to the world out there, the report should prod them into a fresh look at hunger and an increased resolve to drive it back down."

"Jake LaMotta And The Art Of Taking A Punch." A [New York Times](#) editorial.

Washington Post.

"Don't Forget Puerto Rico." A [Washington Post](#) (9/21) calls President Trump's disaster declaration for Puerto Rico "a welcome and needed step as it will make federal assistance available to Puerto Ricans affected by the storm," and adds that his announcement that he will visit the island is "equally welcome" because "in doing so he sets an example for the rest of the country."

"Even Republicans Know Their Healthcare Bill Is Horrible." The [Washington Post](#) (9/21) says in an editorial that "even Republicans know their new health-care bill is horrible," citing Sen. Charles Grassley, "who candidly explained GOP thinking. 'I could maybe give you 10 reasons why this bill shouldn't be considered. ... But Republicans campaigned on this so often that you have a responsibility to carry out what you said in the campaign.'"

"St. Louis Is What Happens When The Justice Department Won't Do Its Job." The [Washington Post](#) (9/21) argues in an editorial that, although the "specifics" of the case against former St. Louis police officer Jason Stockley for the shooting death of Anthony Lamar Smith "are unique...the questions it raises about racial bias in policing are grindingly familiar." The verdict "demonstrates how hard it is for prosecutors to successfully bring cases against police officers." The Post argues "the facts as they stand in St. Louis are more than enough to merit federal review of the city's police force," but Attorney General Jeff Sessions – in his "disdain for police reform" – has ordered the Justice Department to "roll back a program designed to assist local law enforcement with reforms." The Post concludes, "Stockley's case is one more reminder of how much is lost under a Justice Department that refuses to rise to the task."

Wall Street Journal.

"The Panic Over Graham-Cassidy." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/21) says that Democratic arguments against the healthcare bill by Sens. Lindsey Graham and Bill Cassidy are overwrought, and that Democrats' insistence that the process must be bipartisan flies in the face of liberals' own intransigence.

"Right To Work Isn't Theft." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/21) writes that the West Virginia Supreme Court and Wisconsin's District Three Court of Appeals both made recent decisions defending their states' right-to-work legislation in what the Journal describes as the courts' shooting down of unions' legal campaign to save coerced dues

"The SEC's Cyber Embarrassment." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/21) criticizes the SEC for revealing its EDGAR system breach in a four-line admission in the middle of a 4,000-word statement on cybersecurity released Wednesday – an admission the Journal describes as burying the lead. The Journal writes the disclosure provided little information after weeks of learning about the incident, and argues the disclosure was particularly embarrassing in the wake of the Equifax breach.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[SEC Draws Scrutiny For Slow Response To Hack](#)
[Trump Expands North Korea Sanctions](#)
[How Grocery Giant Aldi Plans To Conquer America: Limit Choice](#)
[Facebook Says It Will Hand Over Russia-Backed Ads To Congress](#)

New York Times:

[Facebook To Turn Over Russian-Linked Ads To Congress](#)
[Latest Obamacare Repeal Effort Is Most Far-Reaching](#)
[Puerto Rico Faces Mountain Of Obstacles On The Road To Recovery](#)
[Trump Poised To Drop Some Limits On Drone Strikes And Commando Raids](#)
[Aaron Hernandez Found To Have Severe CTE](#)
[Black Detectives In New York Were Bypassed For Promotions, Panel Finds](#)

Washington Post:

[Maria Passed, Then Terror Began](#)
[Trump Tax Cut Picks Up Steam](#)
[Mexico: No Child Trapped In School](#)
[US Tightens Sanctions As Kim Offers Own Threats](#)
[In Ala. Senate Race, An Outsider Preaches The Gospel Of Defiance](#)
[Facebook To Give Congress Thousands Of Russian Ads](#)

Financial Times:

[Kim Jong Un Says US Will "Pay Dearly" For Trump's Insults](#)
[Theresa May To Offer Stronger Protection For EU Citizens In Florence Speech](#)
[Drop Separatism Calls And We Can Talk Money, Madrid Tells Catalans](#)
[Potato Farmer Uprooted For €1bn Google Investment](#)

Washington Times:

[Trump's Financial Strategy Persuades China To Put Screws To North Korea](#)
[Manafort Wiretaps Raise Questions About Political Motives, Evidence Presented To FISA Court](#)
[With Teens At Risk Of Substance Use Disorder, Activists See Need For More Recovery High Schools](#)
[Pro-Life Activists Pressure Rand Paul To Support Graham-Cassidy Health Care Bill](#)
[Republicans To Introduce \\$1.5 Trillion Tax Cut Blueprint In Senate Next Week](#)
[Sanders Calls War On Terror "A Disaster" In Long-Awaited Speech On Foreign Policy](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Mexico City Earthquake; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Hurricane-Caribbean; Trump-North Korea Sanctions; Russia Meddling Investigation-Facebook; Congress-Healthcare Reform; Oklahoma-Police Shoots Deaf Man; Atlanta-Fiery Car Rescue; California-House Explosion; NFL Player-Head Injury; Tom Cruise-Negligence Lawsuit; College Football News.

CBS: Russia Meddling Investigation-Facebook; Russia Meddling Investigation-Sean Spicer; NFL Player-Head Injury; Mexico City Earthquake; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Trump-North Korea, Iran Sanctions; Flint, Michigan Water Contamination; Turkey-New York Anti-Protester Violence; BYU Soft Drink Policy; Star Trek Technologies.

NBC: Hurricane-Caribbean; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Hurricane Tracking; Mexico City Earthquake; Trump-North Korea Sanctions; Russia Meddling Investigation-Facebook; Congress-Healthcare Reform; Securities And Exchange Commission-Cyber Attack; Opioid Epidemic-CVS Opioid Cap; MLB-Foul Ball Injury; NFL Player-Head Injury; 2018 South Korea Winter Olympics-Medal Design;

Children's Birthday Parties Charity.

Network TV At A Glance:

Hurricane – 10 minutes, 35 seconds
Mexico City Earthquake – 8 minutes
Russia Meddling Investigation – 7 minutes, 55 seconds
Trump-Sanctions – 6 minutes, 50 seconds
Congress-Healthcare Reform – 3 minutes, 40 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Trump-North Korea Sanctions; Hurricane; Congress-Healthcare Reform; Wall Street News.
CBS: North Korea Threats; Russia Meddling Investigation; Trump-Iran Sanctions; Hurricane; NFL Player-Head Injury; Wall Street News.
FOX: Trump-Sanctions; North Korea Threats; St. Louis Protests; Russia Meddling Investigation.
NPR: Hurricane; Mexico City Earthquake; North Korea Threats; Trump-North Korea Sanctions.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Participates in a US Senate Rally for Luther Strange.
VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Participates in a meeting with Maine Governor Paul LePage to discuss health care and tax reform; arrive in Indianapolis, IN on Air Force Two; meets with local business leaders and Hoosier families to discuss health care and tax reform; delivers formal remarks to the community regarding health care and tax reform.

US Senate: 8:30 AM Senate convenes for pro forma session – Senate convenes for a pro forma session * No votes scheduled in the chamber today or tomorrow Location: Washington, DC
<http://www.senate.gov/>

No votes scheduled in the Senate.

US House: On recess until 25 September.

Other: 10:00 AM Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Legislative Conference continues – Congressional Black Caucus Foundation 47th Annual Legislative Conference continues, themed 'And Still I Rise'. Agenda today includes 'Restore the Vote: Election Integrity in the Era of Trump' panel discussion, hosted by Democratic Rep. Terri Sewell, with journalist Roland Martin, California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, NAACP Chairman Leon Russell, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law President and executive director Kristen Clarke, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights President and CEO Vanita Gupta, and Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies President Spencer Overton (10:00 AM EDT); and 'Policing Black Men: Are the Odds Against Them?' town hall, hosted by Democratic Reps. Frederica Wilson and Eleanor Holmes Norton, with National Action Network Founder Rev. Al Sharpton (3:30 PM EDT) Location: Walter E. Washington Convention Center, 801 Mt Vernon Pl, Washington, DC www.cbcfinc.org/alc
[#CBCFALC17](https://twitter.com/CBCFInc)

10:30 AM Bank of England chief economist speaks in Washington, DC – Bank of England chief economist Andy Haldane speaks at joint conference on agent-based modelling Location: Washington, DC www.bankofengland.co.uk <https://twitter.com/bankofengland>

Treasury Secretary Mnuchin chairs Financial Stability Oversight Council meeting – Financial Stability Oversight Council executive session, chaired by Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin, with agenda including an update on the annual reevaluation of the designation of a nonbank financial company, and consideration of the Council's 2018 budget * Council was created by the Dodd-Frank Act to provide comprehensive oversight over the stability of the U.S. financial system for the first time, charged with identifying threats, promoting market discipline, and responding to emerging risks. Other members include the Federal Reserve Board chairman, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau director, Comptroller of the Currency, Federal Housing Finance Agency director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission chairman, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation chairman, National Credit Union Administration chairman, and Securities and Exchange Commission chairman Location: Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC www.treas.gov <https://twitter.com/USTreasury>

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Jimmy Kimmel: "Because for Donald Trump, this isn't about the Graham-Cassidy bill. It's about getting rid of Obamacare, which he hates, primarily because Obama's name is on it. ... At this point, he would sign anything if it meant getting rid of Obamacare. He'd sign copies of the Quran at the Barnes & Noble in Fallujah if it meant he could get rid of Obamacare."

Jimmy Kimmel: "After I accused Bill Cassidy of not telling the truth, the President wrote a tweet of support for him personally. 'Senator (Doctor) Bill Cassidy is a class act who really cares about people and their health (care), he doesn't lie, he just wants to help people.' So I tweeted back, 'That's great news, Mr. President, does that mean he'll vote against the horrible bill he wrote?'"

Jimmy Kimmel: "People tell me, give [Senator Cassidy] the benefit of the doubt, and I do give him the benefit of the doubt. I doubt all the benefits he claims are part of the new healthcare bill."

Jimmy Kimmel: "We haven't seen this many people come forward to speak out against a 'bill' since Cosby. Okay?"

Stephen Colbert: "One of the emails contains cryptic mentions of 'black caviar,' which investigator believe is a veiled reference to payments Manafort hoped to receive. Either that, or black caviar describes how Steve Bannon reproduces."

James Corden: "Today, North Korea's foreign minister responded to Donald Trump's speech at the United Nations, saying that Trump's threats to destroy their country are just, quote, 'the sound of a dog barking.' Now that's not a fair statement because when a dog barks, you actually understand what he is trying to communicate."

James Corden: "North Korea's foreign minister also added that he felt sorry for Trump's staff. So just to recap, a guy who works for the most oppressive dictator on the planet feels sorry for people who work for Donald Trump."

Trevor Noah: "Thanks to the Russian investigation, we've learned so many new ways to evade questions. Manafort with the stutter step. Mike Pence with the smoke screen. And if you really want to know how to not answer a question, there's only one man you can go to, Master Spice [Referring to Sean Spicer]."

Trevor Noah: "Donald Trump is so screwed because with anyone else, they would probably just destroy the evidence. But with Sean Spicer, he'd try to start to burn the notebooks but then somehow end up setting himself on fire, and it just wouldn't work."

Jimmy Fallon: "Some good news for President Trump. A new poll shows that his approval ratings just rose three points. That's right, it's now at four points."

Jimmy Fallon: "Did you see this? North Korea's foreign minister said Trump's speech sounded like a dog barking. Trump didn't respond because he was chasing after a fire truck."

Jimmy Fallon: "In an interview today, Sean Spicer said that he has never knowingly lied to the American people. Then Spicer said, 'Starting now.'"

Seth Meyers: "Former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said in an interview today that he never knowingly lied to the American people while in office. Oh, really? Then how do you explain this? 'It's another busy day here at the White House.'"

Seth Meyers: "A teacher in South Carolina has been suspended after she gave her fifth grade class a homework assignment asking them to justify the KKK's treatment of African-Americans. Also suspended, the kid who got an 'A.'"

Seth Meyers: "[Donald Trump] talks about Middle East peace the way people talk about getting back together with their ex."

Seth Meyers: "The Affordable Care Act includes definitions, in law, of what's reasonable for an individual to spend on premiums, given his or her income. By comparison, the new GOP bill has none of those details. ... And I don't know if you've met the guy who will be signing this bill, but I'm not sure we should go by his definition of affordable."

Conan O'Brien: "Former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said he never knowingly lied to the American people. He then said, 'Damn it, I just lied again. I can't help myself. It's a habit.'"

Conan O'Brien: "This afternoon, North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un lashed out at President Trump, called him 'mentally deranged and a frightened dog.' As a result, Kim Jong-Un is now the Democrats' top pick for President in 2020."

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